

Editorial

Konstantinos Thomaidis, University of Exeter

Listening Across¹

Listening is a foundational concern for recent developments in voice studies, and studies of the aural, oral and the sonic more broadly. Practices and theorizations of listening – and of listening to voice in particular – have been, and still are, prolific and evolving. Foundational texts in our inter-discipline and affiliated research areas have proposed varying taxonomies for understanding listening as both ontological and phenomenal: from Don Ihde's philosophy of sound and phenomenologies of listening ([1976] 2007) and Michel Chion's categorization of listening modes as causal, semantic and reductive (1994) to Jean-Luc Nancy's examination of listening as distinct to hearing (2007). More recent theorizations have foregrounded listening as corporeal and carnal (Le Guin 2006), porous, intersubjective and radically empathetic (Cavarero 2005; LaBelle 2014), implicating the voicer and listener in an in-between (Thomaidis and Macpherson 2015), extending beyond the auditory to engage the tactile, co-vibratory and the sensual (Bonenfant 2013; Eidsheim 2015), embedding the posthuman sound-maker in a vocal assemblage (Neumark 2017) and conceiving listening as agential in the politicizing of sound (Inchley 2015; Stoeber 2016).

What I hear in this dynamic vocal field is an invitation to amplify the various doings, en-actions/intra-actions, happenings, unfoldings and events emerging in and through listening-and-voicing. An invitation to listen-in to the minute specificities of identity-making and phenomenality at play in the reaching-out of voice-listening. To listen-out to the sociopolitical forces and economies of signs manifested in the material concreteness of each

vocal interchange. An understanding of voice as voicing and of voicing, unavoidably, as voicing-listening: a cross-cutting of vocal praxis with its presuppositional or correspondent vocal imaginary rendered listening-voicing. Such polyvalence necessitates plural, diverse and manifold approaches to listening:

- listening across fields of research, training backgrounds and expert disciplinaries²
- listening across intersectional categories and positionalities of race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, gender and class
- listening across species, environments, assemblages
- listening across practice and theorization
- listening across senses, modalities and medialities and listening across multisensorial, multimodal and intermedial listenings
- listening across the spatialities and temporalities of listening.

Listening *across*.

Listening-across as an epistemic provocation.

In many ways, contributions to the opening issue of the fourth volume of the journal tackle some of the above challenges and engage in listening-across. Maria Stuart's article draws on the emerging field of dysfluency studies and listens across Tom Hooper's film *The King's Speech* and work by composer Alvin Lucier and vocal artist Victoria Hanna to amplify the makings of normative speech and propose embodied possibilities for disrupting it. Jon Venn's article dynamically cross-listens between performance studies, politics and suicide studies to interrogate Dead Centre's play *Lippy*, argue that witnessing can move beyond the visuocentric and take place through voice, and propose that such witnessing-as-listening can

simultaneously situate the audience across the positions of testifier, witness and meta-witness. Sarah Weston, in her article, elaborates on voice training workshops in the North of England through Bourdieu's habitus and listens, intersectionally, to class, age, gender and regionality to assert the links between the politics of voice training and (re)training the political voice in the public sphere.

The first contribution to the Voicings section of this issue pays tribute to influential voice director of The Royal Shakespeare Company, Cicely Berry. Twelve of her collaborators share their memories of working, thinking and practicing speech, text and voice training. Collectively, they re-listen to significant moments in the development of such pedagogy and listen-out to the vibrant legacies of Berry's work across theatrical genres, geographical locations and institutional contexts (varying from the Central School of Speech Drama and the Royal National Theatre, UK, to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Sydney Theatre Company). The second Voicing is a cross-disciplinary collaboration between actor trainer Robert Lewis and clinical researcher, physiotherapist and Pilates practitioner Marie-Louise Bird, providing focused research on the activation of abdominal muscles in physiovocally engaged phonation and measuring, through Real Time Ultrasound, the impact of designed exercises/interventions on efficient muscle usage. Caroline Wilkins listens back to early-twentieth-century Russian avant-garde and the development of the language of *zaum* (meaning: beyond mind/sense) to trace a fragmented, diverse but tangible continuation of artistic vocality beyond the linguistic in contemporary vocal experimentation. Wilkins thinks across performance and theory through five practice-as-research projects, and contextualizes the development of her line of enquiry across media and collaborative aesthetic forms. Finally, Sophia Edlund proposes an intriguing cross-listening of the mythology of the Siren song, its literary and philosophical afterlives and the current practice of soprano/conductor

Barbara Hannigan to consider the symbolic value of metamorphosis, lethality and cross-species hybridity for singing.

The journal continues to embrace such cross-listening – dynamic, searching and proliferative – by expanding our team and inviting new voices into the editorial dialogue. Issue 3.1 saw Marcus Cheng Chye Tan (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) join us as associate editor. Starting with this issue, we also wish to welcome our former reviews editor, Gelsey Bell, as associate editor. Gelsey is a New-York-City-based singer, songwriter and scholar. Her research focuses on voice, embodiment and contemporary music. She is currently finishing a book on vocal music of the 1970s in the American experimental music tradition. Her articles have been published in *JIVS*, *TDR/The Drama Review*, *Tempo*, *Women & Performance*, *Movement Research* *Performance Journal* and *Performance Research*. She has a Ph.D. from NYU in performance studies and is the co-critical acts editor for *TDR/The Drama Review*. She has performed her music internationally, has released multiple albums and works with many fellow artists as a collaborator and performer in journeys that have taken her from Lincoln Center to PS1 to Broadway and many windowless clubs and living rooms. We also wish to extend our welcome to our new Reviews Editor, Amy Friskhey. Holding a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology, Amy has a strong interest in issues related to vocality, particularly vocality that challenges or defies clear-cut verbal meaning. Her research has been published in collections (such as *The Garifuna Music Reader*) and journals, including *Radical Musicology*. This work has addressed cross-cultural occurrences of exceptional vocality – like glossolalia, operatic singing, lament and impersonation – and how these also functioned as exoticizing agents in world music of the 1980s and the 1990s, developing the thesis that exceptional vocality around the world serves as a powerful way to grapple with unknowns, the limits of coherence, the boundaries between individual or social selves and

‘others’. She is currently affiliated with Texas Folklife as a contract Media Producer, assisting with folkloric podcasting training for students and community members.

Such listening-across extends beyond this issue as well. We are pleased to invite you to explore the re-designed website of the journal (<http://www.intellectbooks.com/journal-of-interdisciplinary-voice-studies>), which is steadily becoming a rich resource of interdisciplinary research in voice. As previously announced, we are delighted that Issue 4.2 is currently co-edited by Nina Eidsheim and Jessica Holmes on the topic of ‘Music, voice and disability’ and that Maria Stuart and Daniel Martin will edit a special issue on voice and dysfluency studies as part of Volume 5.

A very warm welcome to all new members of the editorial team and our guest editors. We look forward to further listening-across with you, and our readership, in the evolving and multivalent scholarly voicescape that is the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*.

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Notes

¹ I first developed the notion and practice of 'listening across' at the inaugural meeting of the Sound, Voice & Music Working Group at the Theatre & Performance Research Association (TaPRA), in Aberystwyth (September 2018). I wish to thank all members of the group for the generous exchange of ideas and for inviting us to extend our discussion of this theme as the topic of the annual meeting in 2020. Special thanks to my collaborators and co-conveners of the group, Adrian Curtin (University of Exeter) and Leah Broad (Oxford), for their thoughts, critical rigour and advice.

² For recent examples of such ongoing engagement with listening and voicing-listening that move emphatically beyond monodisciplinarity, see Thomaidis and Macpherson (2013) and Voegelin and Barney (2016).